

HAND OF FATE

THE HAND OF

FATE



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[illegible][illegible]

6. **Make** the long-life dream of all artist-entrepreneurs with a **W**ill, **A**mbition, **A**nd **A**ction. **W**ill is the power to make things happen. **A**mbition is the desire to succeed. **A**ction is the ability to take steps to achieve your goals. **W**ill, **A**mbition, and **A**ction are the three essential ingredients for success. **W**ill is the power to make things happen. **A**mbition is the desire to succeed. **A**ction is the ability to take steps to achieve your goals. **W**ill, **A**mbition, and **A**ction are the three essential ingredients for success.

SEND NO MONEY NOW THIS COPY

Figure 1

1974. *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine*, 67, 11-12.

[illegible]

TABLE 1. *Continued*

1000

[illegible][illegible]

LAUREL CO. CHAIRS Includes price of other plus 10% for service charge and tax. See also page 10.

Here Is The Perfect
CHRISTMAS GIFT

Shower. Hot. College — everything
down 1 point to 10 with his mother
and daughter in room on 44000
Cinema this time — looks like an
expensive get — get just on 1000
Cinema continued to be beautiful
and 1000

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Plants! — 100's taken and recorded every year every day and how often you may want to add them. Other rare white shrubs, etc. etc.

1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025, 2026, 2027, 2028, 2029, 2030, 2031, 2032, 2033, 2034, 2035, 2036, 2037, 2038, 2039, 2040, 2041, 2042, 2043, 2044, 2045, 2046, 2047, 2048, 2049, 2050, 2051, 2052, 2053, 2054, 2055, 2056, 2057, 2058, 2059, 2060, 2061, 2062, 2063, 2064, 2065, 2066, 2067, 2068, 2069, 2070, 2071, 2072, 2073, 2074, 2075, 2076, 2077, 2078, 2079, 2080, 2081, 2082, 2083, 2084, 2085, 2086, 2087, 2088, 2089, 2090, 2091, 2092, 2093, 2094, 2095, 2096, 2097, 2098, 2099, 2100, 2101, 2102, 2103, 2104, 2105, 2106, 2107, 2108, 2109, 2110, 2111, 2112, 2113, 2114, 2115, 2116, 2117, 2118, 2119, 2120, 2121, 2122, 2123, 2124, 2125, 2126, 2127, 2128, 2129, 2130, 2131, 2132, 2133, 2134, 2135, 2136, 2137, 2138, 2139, 2140, 2141, 2142, 2143, 2144, 2145, 2146, 2147, 2148, 2149, 2150, 2151, 2152, 2153, 2154, 2155, 2156, 2157, 2158, 2159, 2160, 2161, 2162, 2163, 2164, 2165, 2166, 2167, 2168, 2169, 2170, 2171, 2172, 2173, 2174, 2175, 2176, 2177, 2178, 2179, 2180, 2181, 2182, 2183, 2184, 2185, 2186, 2187, 2188, 2189, 2190, 2191, 2192, 2193, 2194, 2195, 2196, 2197, 2198, 2199, 2200, 2201, 2202, 2203, 2204, 2205, 2206, 2207, 2208, 2209, 2210, 2211, 2212, 2213, 2214, 2215, 2216, 2217, 2218, 2219, 2220, 2221, 2222, 2223, 2224, 2225, 2226, 2227, 2228, 2229, 2230, 2231, 2232, 2233, 2234, 2235, 2236, 2237, 2238, 2239, 2240, 2241, 2242, 2243, 2244, 2245, 2246, 2247, 2248, 2249, 2250, 2251, 2252, 2253, 2254, 2255, 2256, 2257, 2258, 2259, 2260, 2261, 2262, 2263, 2264, 2265, 2266, 2267, 2268, 2269, 2270, 2271, 2272, 2273, 2274, 2275, 2276, 2277, 2278, 2279, 2280, 2281, 2282, 2283, 2284, 2285, 2286, 2287, 2288, 2289, 2290, 2291, 2292, 2293, 2294, 2295, 2296, 2297, 2298, 2299, 2300, 2301, 2302, 2303, 2304, 2305, 2306, 2307, 2308, 2309, 2310, 2311, 2312, 2313, 2314, 2315, 2316, 2317, 2318, 2319, 2320, 2321, 2322, 2323, 2324, 2325, 2326, 2327, 2328, 2329, 2330, 2331, 2332, 2333, 2334, 2335, 2336, 2337, 2338, 2339, 2340, 2341, 2342, 2343, 2344, 2345, 2346, 2347, 2348, 2349, 2350, 2351, 2352, 2353, 2354, 2355, 2356, 2357, 2358, 2359, 2360, 2361, 2362, 2363, 2364, 2365, 2366, 2367, 2368, 2369, 2370, 2371, 2372, 2373, 2374, 2375, 2376, 2377, 2378, 2379, 2380, 2381, 2382, 2383, 2384, 2385, 2386, 2387, 2388, 2389, 2390, 2391, 2392, 2393, 2394, 2395, 2396, 2397, 2398, 2399, 2400, 2401, 2402, 2403, 2404, 2405, 2406, 2407, 2408, 2409, 2410, 2411, 2412, 2413, 2414, 2415, 2416, 2417, 2418, 2419, 2420, 2421, 2422, 2423, 2424, 2425, 2426, 2427, 2428, 2429, 2430, 2431, 2432, 2433, 2434, 2435, 2436, 2437, 2438, 2439, 2440, 2441, 2442, 2443, 2444, 2445, 2446, 2447, 2448, 2449, 2450, 2451, 2452, 2453, 2454, 2455, 2456, 2457, 2458, 2459, 2460, 2461, 2462, 2463, 2464, 2465, 2466, 2467, 2468, 2469, 2470, 2471, 2472, 2473, 2474, 2475, 2476, 2477, 2478, 2479, 2480, 2481, 2482, 2483, 2484, 2485, 2486, 2487, 2488, 2489, 2490, 2491, 2492, 2493, 2494, 2495, 2496, 2497, 2498, 2499, 2500, 2501, 2502, 2503, 2504, 2505, 2506, 2507, 2508, 2509, 2510, 2511, 2512, 2513, 2514, 2515, 2516, 2517, 2518, 2519, 2520, 2521, 2522, 2523, 2524, 2525, 2526, 2527, 2528, 2529, 2530, 2531, 2532, 2533, 2534, 2535, 2536, 2537, 2538, 2539, 2540, 2541, 2542, 2543, 2544, 2545, 2546, 2547, 2548, 2549, 2550, 2551, 2552, 2553, 2554, 2555, 2556, 2557, 2558, 2559, 2560, 2561, 2562, 2563, 2564, 2565, 2566, 2567, 2568, 2569, 2570, 2571, 2572, 2573, 2574, 2575, 2576, 2577, 2578, 2579, 2580, 2581, 2582, 2583, 2584, 2585, 2586, 2587, 2588, 2589, 2590, 2591, 2592, 2593, 2594, 2595, 2596, 2597, 2598, 2599, 2600, 2601, 2602, 2603, 2604, 2605, 2606, 2607, 2608, 2609, 2610, 2611, 2612, 2613, 2614, 2615, 2616, 2617, 2618, 2619, 2620, 2621, 2622, 2623, 2624, 2625, 2626, 2627, 2628, 2629, 2630, 2631, 2632, 2633, 2634, 2635, 2636, 2637, 2638, 2639, 2640, 2641, 2642, 2643, 2644, 2645, 2646, 2647, 2648, 2649, 2650, 2651, 2652, 2653, 2654, 2655, 2656, 2657, 2658, 2659, 2660, 2661, 2662, 2663, 2664, 2665, 2666, 2667, 2668, 2669, 2670, 2671, 2672, 2673, 2674, 2675, 2676, 2677, 2678, 26

THERE ARE MANY WHO BLAME FATE FOR THE BAD LUCK AND FAILURE THEY MEET ALONG LIFE'S PATHWAY. THEY SEEK FORTUNE'S GLORY WITHOUT BEING WILLING TO WORK FOR THEIR REWARD. SUCH WAS THE STORY OF PHILIP RHODES, A YOUNG AMERICAN ART STUDENT IN PARIS. HE WANTED THE MANTLE OF FAME TO REST AROUND HIS SHOULDERS — — — REGARDLESS OF WHAT HE HAD TO DO TO WIN IT...

STRANGE GIFT

from the UNKNOWN

WHY SHOULD YOU WORK AT STUPID, UNINTERESTING JOBS WHEN YOU'VE GOT TALENT?

STOP THINKING ABOUT THAT MONEY YOU EARNED FROM THE BANK! YOU HAD TO GO IT IF YOU WANTED TO COME TO COME TO PARIS AND STUDY ART!

THINK OF YOURSELF! YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE THAT MATTERS!

BUT THERE ALWAYS COMES A DAY OF RECKONING FOR SUCH AS PHILIP.

WHO WOULD BUY THIS PICTURE? YOU HAVE NO TALENT! BUT IF YOU STUDY MORE, YOU MAY SOMEDAY PAINT WELL ENOUGH TO MAKE A BARE LIVING!

AND THAT EVENING...

HANETTE! YOU SAID YOU LOVED ME.

IF YOUR MONEY IS GONE, I HAVE NO MORE TIME OR LOVE TO WASTE ON YOU!

I HAVE NO MORE MONEY FOR STUDY! I—I'VE SPENT ALL I HAD!



THAT NIGHT, IN A CHEAP DIVE NEAR HIS ROOM IN THE RUE DU FAUBOURG MONTMARTRE, PHILIP TOLD HIS TROUBLES TO A STRANGER

I'M SICK OF LIVING A HAND-TO-FOOTH EXISTENCE! NO MATTER WHAT I DO, THE ONLY LUCK I HAVE IS BAD!

A FRIEND OF MINE CAN GIVE SUCH THINGS HE CAN HELP YOU BECOME WHATEVER YOU WISH! FAME, FORTUNE, A NEW LIFE MAY ALL BE YOURS. HERE IS HIS ADDRESS



AND SO PHILIP WENT FORWARD ON HIS QUEST FOR EASY FAME AND UNREALIZED FORTUNE...

YOU ARE SEARCHING FOR SOMETHING, W'SIEN?



YES... A LITTLE SHOP ON A STREET I WAS TOLD I WOULD FIND AROUND HERE... A WISEW HOLE ON THE RUE DES ACHERES

AH, YEE. DOWN THERE, BENEATH THE BRIDGE. YOU CAN'T MISS IT.



HERE, FRIEND! I SEE IT NOW!



PHILIP, IN HIS HURRY, DID NOT PAUSE TO TAKE A CLOSE LOOK AT THE STRANGER WHO DIRECTED HIM, OR HE MIGHT HAVE TURNED BACK FROM THAT RECKLESS SEARCH



NO, YOU CANNOT MISS IT NOW, PHILIP KNOWS... BUT WHAT ROAD YOU NOW TAKE WILL DETERMINE YOUR DESTINY!

AS PHILIP HURRIED DOWN THE STEPS TOWARD THE TERRIBLE DESTINY AHEAD, HE HAD TO HAVE ANOTHER CHANCE TO TURN BACK



ALTHOUGH IT IS ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE TO MAKE PHILIP--AND THE OTHERS LIKE HIM--BELIEVE IT, FATE'S DECIDES ARE FAIR, GIVING EVERYONE JUSTICE AND AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY TO SAVE THEMSELVES



LOOK WHAT'S HERE! MUST BE A MOHAMMEDAN OR SOME KIND OF CULT! YOU CAN FIND ANYTHING IN PARIS!

GOOD EVENING, MY FRIEND. I WOULD GO NO FURTHER IF I WERE YOU! THIS IS AN AREA OF SINISTER EVIL WHICH WISE AND DECENT MEN AVOID!



SAY! WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE, ANYWAY?

SOME AROUND RESED UP LIKE THE
VEILED PROMET DOESN'T GIVE YOU
THE RIGHT TO INTERFERE WITH
PEOPLE'S BUSINESS / ... NOW OUT
OF MY WAY, SCREWWALL /

SUPPOSE YOU KNEW YOU WERE
BEING WARNED BY FATE, PHILIP
FRODOES---WOULD THAT
STOP YOU?

WITH THE MIND OF LUCKY FATE
HAS-DISHED OUT TO ME, I'D LIKE
NOTHING BETTER THAN TO
TAKE A CRACK AT HIM / I
TOLD YOU TO LET ME BY /
' HEY ... DOFFS /

I'LL SAY IT WOULDN'T /
AND IF YOU DON'T MOVE---
I'LL MOVE YOU /

PHILIP'S BLOW CUT THROUGH
THE AIR, SENDING HIM OFF
BALANCE AND CRASHING DOWN
THE STEPS.

YOU WERE WARNED, PHILIP
AND GIVEN A CHANCE TO TURN
BACK / NOW YOU MUST FOLLOW
YOUR STARDOWN COURSE
TO THE END /

OVER / IN SPITE OF ALL THOSE
CHAMBERIES, THAT FELLOW WAS A
MIGHTY QUICK DOODER / MY BLOW
SEEMED TO GO RIGHT THROUGH HIM /

SAY / AM I CRAZY, OR DID HE
CALL ME BY MY NAME / BUT
I MUST'VE BEEN MISTAKEN /
SAY, WHERE DID HE
DISAPPEAR TO?

FINALLY, PHILIP FOUND A STREET
HE HAD NEVER HEARD OF BEFORE ALL
HIS WANDERINGS AROUND PARIS.

THIS IS IT, ALL RIGHT /
NOW I'LL FIND OUT IF
THAT GUY I MET IN THE
BAR TONIGHT WAS RIGHT
BECAUSE THERE'S THE
SHOP HE TOLD
ME ABOUT /



AS PHILIP APPROACHED THE SHOP, HE HAD THE FRIGHTENING FEELING THAT HORRIBLE, EVIL THINGS LURKED IN THE SHADOWS AROUND HIM. BUT HE MADE UP HIS MIND. ANYWAY, SHOULD STOP HIM IN HIS STRANGE QUEST.





AND SO WE HAVE SEEN
PHILIP RHODES SEARCHING
FOR A MAGIC FORMULA TO
OVERCOME LIFE'S DIFFICULTIES.

MY BUSINESS METHODS MAY SEEM
STRANGE TO YOU, MY FRIEND. I HAVE
A BARTER SYSTEM.
YOU MAY HAVE ANY
PICTURE IN THIS SHOP.
ALL I WANT IN RE-
TURN IS A PICTURE OF YOURSELF TO
PUT IN ITS PLACE.



LET ME EXPLAIN. I CALL MY
PICTURES PERSONALITY POR-
TRAITS. EACH PERSON WHOSE
PICTURE YOU SEE HERE HAS
ACHIEVED RICHES, DISTINCTION,
FAME. WHATEVER THEY HAVE
ACCOMPLISHED YOU MAY
ACCOMPLISH. THEIR FORTUNE
AND TALENTS MAY BECOME
YOURS SIMPLY BY TAKING THE
PICTURE YOU HAVE CHOSEN
HOME WITH YOU.



THIS YOUNG MAN—OF COURSE, I
CANNOT MENTION NAMES—WAS A
FAMOUS ARTIST WHOSE PAINTINGS
BROUGHT HIM EVERYTHING HE DE-
SIRED. WHY NOT TAKE IT? HANG IT
WHERE YOU SEE IT EACH DAY—
ABSORBING THE PERSONALITY AND
FORTUNE OF THE MAN PORTRAYED.



IT'S INCREDIBLE!
SUCH A THING COULD
NOT HAPPEN!

HAI? HAI?
AND THEN
ONE!

IS IT NOT AT LEAST WORTH A
TRIAL, MR. RHODES, JUST TO
SEE WHAT WILL HAPPEN?
ARE YOU NOT CURIOUS?



YES! YES! OF
COURSE! I TOLD
YOU I WAS DESPERATE
ENOUGH TO TRY ANY-
THING!

WE WILL HANG
YOUR PICTURE
HERE IN PLACE
OF THE ONE YOU
ARE TAKING.

BUT THAT'S JUST
A BLANK CANVAS!
I HAVE NO PICTURES
OF MYSELF—AND
WHO WOULD WANT
ONE OF ME,
ANYHOW!



AS YOU SEE, PHILIP
RHODES, THE CANVAS
HAS NOT REMAINED
BLANK! IT IS PART OF
THE BARTER! I LIKE
TO KEEP PICTURES OF
MY CUSTOMERS!

WHA... WHAT
SORT OF DEVILISH
TRICK IS THIS?



THE BARGAIN IS SEALED.
FROM NOW ON YOUR
FORTUNES WILL CHANGE!

I—I DON'T GET IT! I—
I'M GETTING OUT OF HERE
... QUICK!





PHILIP WAS MORE FRIGHTENED THAN HE CARED TO ADMIT...

THAT PICTURE OF ME... IT MUST HAVE BEEN SOME SORT OF TRICK PHOTOGRAPHY AND THE GUY WAS PUTTING ON AN ACT! THE WHOLE BUSINESS WAS CRAZY!



WHEN PHILIP GOT BACK TO HIS OWN ROOM HE HUNG UP THE PICTURE OF THE UNKNOWN ARTIST.

I DON'T KNOW WHY I'M BOTHERING TO DO THIS! THAT GUY IN THE BAR AND THIS MONKCH MUST BOTH BE RUTHLESS PERSONALITY PORTRAITISTS! THIS GUY WAS A SERIOUS—RICH AND FAMOUS—AND I'LL ADORE HIS PERSONALITY! HOW CRAZY CAN YOU GET!



BUT AS PHILIP LOOKED AT THE PICTURE HE HAD JUST HUNG, STRANGE NEW EMOTIONS SUDDENLY SEIZED HIM.

I MUST PAINT! THERE ARE THINGS IN MY MIND THAT MUST BE PUT ON CANVAS. STRANGE, HORRIBLE, WONDERFUL THINGS!



GOING TO HIS EASEL, OBSCURED BY ANYTHING BUT THE STRANGE FIGURES THAT OBSESSED HIM, PHILIP PAINTED FEVERISHLY ALL THAT NIGHT AND THE NEXT DAY.



SLEPT ALONE BY IMPULSE HE COULD NOT CONTROL. PHILIP CARRIED HIS FINISHED CANVASES TO THE ART DEALER WHO HAD PREVIOUSLY SCOFFED AT HIS WORK.

I NEVER DREAMED YOU COULD DO SUCH THINGS! THERE HAS BEEN NOTHING LIKE THIS SINCE CORTAAN! IT IS A TERRIBLE, WERD BEAUTY! YOU ARE ON THE ROAD TO FAME! I WILL BUY THESE AT YOUR PRICE!

I'M GLAD YOU LIKE THEM!



IN THE MONTHS THAT FOLLOWED PHILIP BECAME THE NAME OF ARTS AND THE ART WORLD. EVERYTHING HE HAD EVER WANTED WAS HIS.

THERE HADN'T BEEN AN ARTIST LIKE THIS IN YEARS! THE STRANGE HORROR... THE GENIUS IN EVERY STROKE!

I JUST PAID TEN THOUSAND DOLLARS FOR HIS VAMPIRE PICTURE. I HAVE A COPYMAN ORIGINAL, SO MUCH LIKE IT THAT IT'S FANTASTIC!

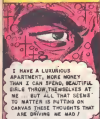


BUT WHEN HE WAS ALONE, PHILIP BECAME INCREASINGLY AFRAID OF THE THOUGHTS HE COULD NOT CONTROL.

THESE HORRORS THAT I PAINT—THEY BECOME LIKE REAL THINGS... DRIVING ME... MOKING ME...



*EACH DAY AND NIGHT
HAS MADE HORRIBLE AT
THE EVIL IMAGES AND
DESIGNS THAT WERE
BECOMING STRONGER.*



I HAVE A LUXURIOUS
APARTMENT, MORE MONEY
THAN I CAN SPEND, BEAUTIFUL
GIRLS THROW THEMSELVES AT
ME... BUT ALL THAT SEEMS
TO MATTER IS PUTTING ON
CANVAS THESE THOUGHTS THAT
ARE DRIVING ME MAD!



*PHILIP REALIZED
HE MUST DO SOMETHING
TO SAVE
HIMSELF FROM
INSANITY.*



NOW THAT I KNOW I REALLY
HAVE GREAT TALENT, THERE'S
NO REASON WHY I SHOULD
CHANGE MY STYLE AND PAINT
ONLY BEAUTIFUL THINGS
THAT WILL HELP DRIVE AWAY
THESE HORRIBLE THOUGHTS!

THE ONLY BEAUTIFUL THINGS ARE
THOSE OF EVIL AND HORROR! HOW
MUCH MORE INTERESTING IT WOULD
BE TO PAINT THE GIRL AS SHE WOULD
LOOK AFTER SHE
HAD BEEN
STRANGLED!



YES, YES...
THAT'S THE IDEA!
AND IT WOULD
BRING AN
ENORMOUS PRICE!

MR RHODES!
WHAT'S THE MATTER?
DON'T---DON'T LOOK
AT ME LIKE THAT!

WHY DIDN'T I THINK OF THIS
BEFORE! INSTEAD OF HAVING
TO BELIEVE IN THOSE HORRIBLE
CREATURES OF MY IMAGINATION,
I CAN DO A SERIES OF MURDER
PICTURES... WITH DEAD
HUMAN MODELS!



*AS HIS MURDEROUS MOOD
PASSES AWAY, AS QUICKLY
AS IT CAME, PHILIP RE-
ALIZED WHAT HE HAD DONE!*



WHAT HAVE I DONE? I---I MUST
HAVE BEEN OUT OF MY MIND! I'M
NOT MYSELF! I---I HAVEN'T BEEN
MYSELF SINCE I GOT THAT PICTURE
FROM MOLOCH! I'LL TAKE IT BACK---
GET MY OWN PICTURE BACK AGAIN!

MR RHODES!
THE POLICE SAY
THEY HEARD A
SCREAM FROM
YOUR STUDIO.



*SEIZING THE PORTRAIT
HE HAD BOTTEN FROM
MOLOCH, PHILIP RAN FROM
HIS STUDIO THROUGH A
BACK DOOR, BUT WHEN
HE REENTR MOLOCH'S SHOP...*



THERE'S NO SHOP LIKE THAT
AROUND HERE! NOR NO STREET
BY THE NAME RUE DES ACHERON.
THERE'S NOTHING DOWN THERE
BUT THE CEMETERY, WHERE THEY
BURY THE BODIES OF CRIMINALS
WHO HAVE BEEN PUT TO DEATH
FOR THEIR MISDEEDS!



WHAT PICTURE? JULES COCTEAU!
I USED TO SEE HIM WHEN I WAS A
YOUNG MAN... WANDERING AROUND
THE NEIGHBORHOOD! A GREAT
ARTIST... BUT A FEND... NOW
BURIED IN THAT CEMETERY!

PHILIP RHODES!
WE WISH TO QUESTION
YOU CONCERNING A
MURDER IN YOUR
STUDIO!

NO!... NO!



AND SO PHILIP RHODES FOLLOWED IN THE FOOTSTEPS
OF THE MAD GENIUS WHOSE PERSONALITY AND FORTUNES
HE ACCEPTED WHEN HE LEFT HIS OWN SOUL IN COMMAND.
IF YOU, TOO, SEEK MOLOCH, ENDEAVORING
TO CHANGE YOUR FATE, YOU MAY FIND
HIS SHOP ON THIS VERY SPOT SOME
DARK NIGHT---JUST AS PHILIP ONCE
FOUND IT! YOU MAY EVEN SEE
PHILIP'S PORTRAIT AND WISH TO
TAKE IT HOME
WITH YOU!

THE
END

A Hand of FATE Mystery

#1-7

ON THE DESOLATE HIGHLANDS OF THE SCOTTISH MOORS, THERE ARE FOOTPRINTS OF A HUGE ANIMAL THAT TO THIS DAY DEFIES EXPLANATION. THE FANTASTIC TALE OF THEIR ORIGIN BEGINS IN THE LATE 18TH CENTURY WHEN TWO BRITISH EXPLORERS RETURNED TO ENGLAND WITH A CURIOUS PREHISTORIC EGG THEY HAD FOUND IN SCOTLAND.

BUT TRENT TOOK NO NEED AND WENT AHEAD WITH HIS EXPERIMENT ON THE DESOLATE MOORS.



THIS EGG HAD BEEN FROZEN FOR AGES. PERHAPS WE CAN HATCH IT.

I WOULDN'T POOL WITH ANYTHING LIKE THAT, TRENT. WE DON'T KNOW WHAT THAT BEASTLY THING CONTAINS.



LOOK, PETER! AFTER MONTHS OF WAITING, THE EGG IS STARTING TO HATCH!

THE LIFE THAT WAS PRESERVED IN THE EGG FINALLY EMERGED.



IT—IT'S HORRIBLE! WE MUST KILL IT!

NO! LET IT GROW TO FULL SIZE!



MONTHS PASSED AND THE CREATURE GREW IN SIZE, STRENGTH AND WILDLINESS UNTIL ONE DAY.

IT'S BREAKING OUT OF THE STEEL CAGE!

STOP! I COMMAND YOU TO STOP!

THE CREATURE SEIZED TRENT AND FLED INTO THE NIGHT. PETER FOLLOWED THE MONSTER'S FOOTPRINTS UNTIL.



H—HE'S DEAD! THE BLOOD DRAINED FROM HIS BODY! THE BEAST LIVES ON BLOOD!

THE TERROR-STACKEN HAD RAGED TO A NEARBY TOWN FOR HELP. THE TOWNSPEOPLE REACHED THE TERRIBLE SCENE AND WERE CONVINCED THAT A BRASTLY MONSTER WAS ON THE LOOSE. NO TRACE HAS EVER FOUND OF THE PREHISTORIC BEAST, BUT EVERY SO OFTEN A BLOODLESS COMET IS FOUND ON THE MOOR AS EVIDENCE THAT THE FANTASTIC ANIMAL FROM THE PAST STILL EXISTS! ANOTHER STRANGE TALE RECORDED IN THE ANNALS OF THE SUPERNATURAL!

THE END

REVENGE OF THE HAUNTED

THE HAND OF FATE IS UPON YOU, BIFF STONE! FOR 19 YEARS I'VE WATCHED YOU LIVE BY LIES, DECEIT AND TRICKERY! NOW YOUR HOUR OF RETRIBUTION IS APPROACHING SWIFTLY... ARE YOU PREPARED TO REAP THE HORROR YOU HAVE SOWN?

A WEREWOLF!
THE CIRCUS PEOPLE
WILL PAY PLENTY FOR
A FREAK LIKE THIS!



YOU FOULCE UPON THE BEAST-MAN LIKE A WILD ANIMAL, BIFF STONE... AND YOU THROW YOUR NET OVER HIM

BUT A WEREWOLF HAS THE STRENGTH OF AN ARMY, BIFF... AND THIS ONE BREAKS OUT OF YOUR NYLON NET AS IF IT WERE A WET PAPER BAG

THIS NYLON NET CAN HOLD A SHERMAN TANK, SO NO USE FIGHTING, YOU MISERABLE FREAK!

ARRRRRRRRRR

ROWWWWW!

HOLT SMOKE!
ME - HE'S LOOSE!
HELP! HELP!
OW-W-W!



OH-W! HE'S STRANGLING ME! BUT I CAN STILL OUTSMART HIM IF I CAN ONLY GET THAT HYPO-DERMIC SPRINGER OUT OF MY POCKET! AH-N, THERE! I'VE GOT IT!

AND NOW YOU'VE GOT IT FREAK... NEEDLE FIRST!

OUT LIKE A LIGHT! AND THAT SERPENT WILL KEEP HIM THAT WAY UNTIL I DELIVER HIM TO THE CIRCUS! CAN YA IMAGINE... A WEREWOLF TRYIN' TO OUTSMART BIFF STONE? HA!

YOWWWW



THAT'S ANOTHER ENTRY UNDER YOUR NAME IN THE BOOK OF FATE, BIFF STONE! AND LATER, AS YOU COUNT YOUR MONEY, I RECALL AN OLD SAYING... "HE WHO WAS BORN TO BE HARNED, SHALL NEVER BE DROPPED!"

NOTHING'S TOO TOUGH FOR BIFF STONE... NOT IF THE PAY IS RIGHT! TRAPPIN' WILD CREATURES IS MY BUSINESS AN' I CAN OUTSMART ANY FREAK. WHAT'S THE CHORE, GENTLEMEN... AND HOW MUCH IS IT WORTH?

FIVE THOUSAND DOLLARS... IF YOU SET US A VAMPIRE!

SEVENTY, EIGHTY... HARTY, BAD THEY WAKED IT AN' EVEN THOUSAND DOLLARS! THANKS BENTS... THE WEREWOLF IS YOURS!

WE'VE GOT ANOTHER JOB FOR YOU, BIFF. IT'S A TOLAH ONE... BUT WE NEED A CERTAIN SPOONMEN TO COMPLETE OUR HORROR SIDE SHOW!



SURE YOU TAKE THE JOB, BIFF! THERE ISN'T ANYTHING YOU WOULDN'T DO FOR MONEY! AND A WEEK LATER YOU'RE IN ROMBERY... THE LORD OF VAMPIRES...

THE VILLAGERS SAID THAT A VAMPIRE ALWAYS APPEARS ON A FULL-MOON NIGHT. NOW ALL I'VE GOT TO DO IS OUP MY FINGER A LITTLE AND LET THE WIND CARRY THE SMELL OF BLOOD TO THE BLOOD-HUNGRY JERK!

HOLY CA-SPES! IT WORKED! BUT THERE'S THREE VAMPIRES... NOT ONE! I... I HAVEN'T GOT A CHANCE AGAINST THREE OF THEM!





NOT A CHANCE IF I FIGHT 'EM. BUT IF I USE MY HEAD I CAN OUTSMART THE DOPES!

THERE HE IS! WE SHALL SHARE HIM FAIRLY, AS WE ALWAYS SHARE OUR VICTIMS. LET US BEGIN!



TRAITOR! IF YOU THREE ALWAYS SHARE YOUR VICTIMS FAIRLY... WHY IS IT THAT ONE OF YOU IS FATTER THAN THE OTHERS?

YES... IT IS TRUE! YOU HAVEN'T BEEN HONEST WITH US, KATO!

I HAVE! BUT IT IS YOU WHO IS THE PLUMP ONE. YOU'VE BEEN CHEATING ON US!



THE FOOLS FELL FOR IT! THEY'RE FIGHTING AMONG THEMSELVES!

YOU'LL NEVER CHEER ON US AGAIN!



HE DESTROYED THE WRONG ONE! IT'S PLAIN TO SEE THAT HE HIMSELF IS THE GUILTY ONE! GET HIM BEFORE HE GETS YOU!

YES... YES! YOU ARE THE BETRAYER! I SHALL DESTROY YOU!



YOU'VE PLANTED THE SEEDS OF MISTRUST! WELL, SUFF... AND YOU BARK! AS YOU WATCH THE VAMPIRES CLASH AT EACH OTHER...

YOU'RE A DISGRACE TO ALL VAMPIRES!

THE CURSE OF DRACULA BE UPON YOU!




WITH MY LAST OFFICE OF STRENGTH I DRIVE THIS WOODEN STAKE THROUGH YOUR MISERABLE HEART, YOU TRAITOR!



THE STRUGGLE HAS DRAINED ALL MY STRENGTH... I CAN HARDLY STAND.



THAT'S THE WAY I FOUNDED IT, SUCKER! NOW I'LL REAP THIS CHAIN AROUND YOU! AND WE'LL HEAD BACK TO THE DOODOO! U.S.A. TO COLLECT MY FIVE GRAND FOR YOU!



YOU DELIVER THE VAMPIRE TO THE GINGOS
PEOPLE, BIFF... BUT THEY HAVE A
SURPRISE IN STORE FOR YOU...


BUT IT WAS A SAG, GIFF
WE—WE THOUGHT VAMPIRES
LIVED ONLY IN FANTASY
BOOKS. WE CAN'T AFFORD
TO PAY YOU FIVE THOUSAND.
HOW ABOUT TWO?

YOU SAID FIVE
GRAND AND THAT'S
WHAT IT'S GOING
TO BE! I AIN'T
RUNNIN' A BARGAIN
BASEMENT!



PAY UP OR I'LL
TAKE IT OUT OF
YOUR HIDES!

OHAY, BIFF! DON'T
GET EXCITED...
WE'LL PAY!



SURE YOU GOT YOUR MONEY, BIFF...AND
I'VE GOT ANOTHER ENTRY TO MAKE TO
YOUR ACCOUNT IN THE BOOK OF FATE...

THE DIRTY CROOK,
TRYING TO CHEAT ME
OUT OF...HEY!
WHAT'S THIS?



HE-HE-N! JUST AS I
THOUGHT...IT'S A TRICK!

HEY? YES, SIR.
WHAT CAN I DO
FOR YOU?

HEY, YOU!



YOU CAN REFUND MY TWO BUCKS
THIS DUMP'S A PROMET! THE
SIGN OUTSIDE SAYS YOU'VE GOT
EVERY FORM OF MARINE LIFE IN
HERE... AN' I SAY YOU DON'T!

BUT YOU MUST BE
MISTAKEN, SIR. WE HAVE
EVERY SPECIES IN THE
WORLD!



OH, YEAP?
THEN WHERE'S
YOUR MERMAID?



MERMAID? YOU
... YOU'RE JOKIN!
MERMAIDS DON'T
EXIST! THEY ...
THEY'RE
IMAGINARY
CREATURES!

IF THEY
WEREN'T
WED GIVE
ANYTHING
TO HAVE
ONE.

LAY TWENTY
FIVE GRAND OF
THAT ANYTIME
ON THE LINE.
MISTER... AND I'LL
PLAC A REAL LIVE
MERMAID INTO
THAT TANK WITHIN
A MONTH. IS IT
A DEAL?





YES, IT'S A REAL BIFF!
HE CALLS YOUR BLUFF
AND YOU'RE OFF TO
DIE BY PLANE.

MERMAIDS ARE ENCHANTED BY
MUSIC, AND THIS RECORDING
I HAD MADE OF LYRIC MUSIC
SHOULD DRAW THEM OUT OF
THE SEA IF THEY'RE
STILL AROUND.

HEY! SOMETHING IS BREAKING
THE SURFACE OUT THERE! I CAN
SEE TWO FORMS COMING OUT OF
THE WATER. THEY MUST
BE MERMAIDS!

THE STRAIT OF MESSINA IS
THE LEGENDARY PLAYGROUND OF
THE MERMAIDS. AND FISHERMEN
STILL REPORT THAT THEY
SEE MERMAIDS THERE.



HOLY SHOOKS! THEY'RE
NOT MERMAIDS! THEY...
THEY'RE THINGS FROM BENEATH
THE SEA! AND THEY'RE COMING
AFTER ME!



LET GO, YOU BLASTED
MONSTERS! LET GO
OF ME! GET YOUR
FILTY FLAPPERS
OFF OF ME!

YES, BIFF... JUST A LITTLE TWIST OF
FATE... AND YOU GET MONSTERS INSTEAD
OF MERMAIDS! WHAT TRICKERY ARE YOU
GOING TO USE NOW?

I... I CAN'T DO ANYTHING
AGAINST THEM. THEY THEY'RE
DRAGGING ME INTO THE SEA!



HELP!
SAVE ME SOMEBODY!
HELP!
HE...
ULP!
GLUB!
GLUB!





CRIPES! I'M ON THE
BOTTOM OF THE SEA!

BRING HIM HERE,
PESCAPORES!



HOLY SMOKE! A
MERMAID! I WAS
RIGHT... THEY DO
EXIST... AND THIS
ONE'S WORTH
PLENTY TO ME!
I'VE GOT TO PLAY
THIS SHANT!

IT IS USELESS TO
STURDLE, BEING OF THE
UPPER WORLD / YOU WILL
NEVER RETURN UP THERE
YOU WILL REMAIN HERE AND
BECOME ONE OF US. I AM
PESCA, QUEEN OF THE FISH
PEOPLE... AND YOU SHALL
BE MY KING!



SURE I'LL BE YOUR KING, ROYAL
HIGHNESS! BUT LET'S GET OUT OF
THIS LEARY GUFF! I'LL TAKE YOU
TO NEW YORK. YOU'LL HAVE PRETTY
CLOTHES, DIAMONDS, A BIG CAR
...EVERYTHING!

YOU MAKE YOUR
WORLD SOUND WONDERFUL
... BUT I CAN NEVER BE
PART OF IT!



I'D BE A FREAK UP
THERE! THEY'S PUT ME
IN A TANK AND EXHIBIT
ME! PEOPLE WOULD
STARE AT ME AND
LAUGH... AFTER ALL,
I AM HALF WOMAN...
AND HALF FISH!



SHE MAY BE A FISH, RIFF...
BUT SHE'S NOT A SUGHER! YOU
BETTER TALK FAST...

BUT THAT'S THE
WAY IT'LL BE WITH
ME DOWN HERE.
QUEEN, I'M A
HUMAN BEING!

IN A SHORT
TIME YOU WILL
BECOME AS WE
ARE YOU WILL
BE A MERMAN!



I WAS OF THE UPPER
WORLD ONCE TOO? I
FELL OUT OF MY
FATHER'S FISHING
BOAT WHEN I WAS
YOUNG. THE FISH
PEOPLE TOOK CARE
OF ME AND THEN
MADE ME THEIR
QUEEN!

CRIPES! I BETTER
FORGET
THE DOUGH
AND STAY
THINKING
OF MY OWN
SCUM!



OKAY, QUEEN
PESCA... YOU
WIN! I'LL STAY!

GOOD! NOW KISS
ME TO SEAL OUR
ENGAGEMENT!



SURE I'LL KISS YOU QUEEN
RIGHT BETWEEN THE
SHOULDER BLADES WITH
MY KNIFE! NOBODY OUT-
SHANTS RIFF ANOTHER!

THIS IS THE BLACKEST OF ALL, YOUR DEEDS,
BUFF STONE... AND I SHALL RECORD IT IN
THE BOOK OF FATE FOR THE DAY OF REDEMPTION.

SHE'S DEAD! AND I BETTER GET
OUT OF THIS DEEP DRINK ON THE DOUBLE!
THOSE BOOGS OF HERE HAVE SPOTTED ME!



TWO DAYS LATER, IT'S GOOD TO FEEL THE
SIDEWALKS OF NEW YORK UNDER YOUR FEET
AGAIN, DOESN'T IT, BUFF? BUT ENJOY IT...
BECAUSE SOON YOUR HOUR OF REDEMPTION
WILL TOLL.

I'M GONE IN HERE
AND TELL THAT FISH
COLLECTOR TO KEEP
HIS STINKIN' NOSE
NOTHING IS WORTH
GOING DOWN INTO
THAT SLURRY DRINK
AGAIN!

GRAND OPENING
The
MOST COMPLETE
ADVENTURE
IN THE WORLD

BY SHOWING FISH
MAKING LIFE ON
EARTH

ADMISSION
\$2.00



OH, MY! SOMEBODY MUST HAVE
FALLEN INTO THE TANK I WAS
SAVING FOR THE MERMAID THAT
BUFF STONE PERSON PROMISED
TO DELIVER!



GREAT SCOTT! IT'S A
MERMAID! A REAL
MERMAID! AN BUFFSTONE
MUST'VE DELIVERED IT!
BUT WHERE IS HE?



The Money Finger writes, and, having will,
Shall here be back to control half a line
See all your Tears wash out a Word of it



I—I MADE IT!
THOSE FISH-FREAKS
WOON'T CHASE ME
OVER LAND!

THIS IS IT, BUFF!
THE HAND OF FATE
IS UPON YOU! A
LITTLE PUSH
AND...

HEY! WHAT THE?
WHO PUSHED ME?
HELP! I—I'M
FALLING INTO
THAT TANK!



A Hand of FATE Mystery

—28

GREED HAS BEEN THE MOTIVATOR OF MANY CRIMES. THE STRANGEST OF THESE CRIMINAL ACTS OCCURRED IN THE LATE PART OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY IN A EUROPEAN COUNTRY. MARTIN BROWER WAS A GREEDY MAN BY NATURE AND A SPENDTHRIFT BY DEEDS. HIS CALLOUS USE OF MONEY ALWAYS LEFT HIM IN DIRE STRAITS. ONE NIGHT HE VISITED HIS ELDERLY UNCLE TO SEEK A LOAN.



I AM A POOR MAN, MARTIN? I CANNOT GIVE YOU ANY MORE MONEY!

POOR, YOU SAY? WHAT OF THAT RING YOU WEAR? IT WILL BE MINE WHEN YOU DIE, SO WHY NOT GIVE IT TO ME NOW?



THIS RING HAS BEEN IN OUR FAMILY FOR GENERATIONS! IT WILL NOT BE USED FOR YOUR FRIVOLOUS WISHES! YOUR GREED WILL BRING YOU A TERRIBLE DEATH ONE DAY!

CALM DOWN, UNCLE! I'LL POUR YOU SOME WINE!

WITH A DOSE OF POISON!



AAGGHH— Y—YOU'VE POISONED ME...

NOW, WITH YOUR DEATH, I WILL INHERIT YOUR RING!



THE CAUSE OF THE OLD MAN'S DEATH WAS UNOCCUPIED AND HIS BODY WAS INTERRED. DAYS LATER...

YOUR UNCLE LEFT YOU NOTHING IN HIS WILL. THE RING WAS BURIED WITH HIM AS HE REQUESTED BEFORE HIS DEATH!

WHA—!—IT CAN'T BE!— I'M PENLESS!



BUT BROWER WOULD NOT REST UNTIL HE HAD THE RING! LATE ONE NIGHT, HE VISITED HIS UNCLE'S GRAVE.

I MUST GET THAT RING—AH, I'VE REACHED THE CABINET!



AHH—UNCLE— YOU'RE ALIVE... AARRGGHHH

THAT MORNING, BROWER WAS FOUND STRANGLING LYING ACROSS HIS UNCLE'S OPEN COFFIN—THE OLD MAN'S CHARLED FINGERS STILL IN A DEATH GRIP AROUND HIS NEPHEW'S THROAT! HIS UNCLE'S PREDICTION HAD COME TRUE! BROWER'S AMBITION HAD ONLY BROUGHT HIM TO A BRUTAL, SUPERNATURAL DEMISE!

THE END

PHANTOMS of the forgotten

WHA! THESE ARE THE
SPIRITS OF THE MOST EVIL
KILLERS WHO EVER LIVED...
AND THEY'RE HERE TO
COMMAND! THROUGH THEM
I CAN OATH MY REVENGE...
AND SHOW THE WORLD
WHAT HAPPENS WHEN
ANYONE DEIES
GEORGE CRANDALL!



R.I.P.

UNWISDOM KNOWLEDGE IN THE HANDS
OF A MAN WHO IS FILLED WITH GREED
AND A NEED FOR REVENGE CAN BE A
TWO-EDGED SWORD! FOR ALTHOUGH
IT MAY FULFILL HIS WISHING, IT CAN
ALSO LEAD TO HIS DESTRUCTION. SUCH
A MAN WAS GEORGE CRANDALL, WHO
STARTED AN IRREVOCABLE MARCH TO
HIS FATE WHEN HIS GREED LED HIM
TO HIS FIRST CRIME . . . STEALING
MONEY FROM THE RAILROAD WHERE
HE WORKED AS CASHIER.



GEORGE CRANDALL MET THESE
CREATURES OF A BLOODY PAST AFTER
HIS SECOND FATAL STEP. BREAKING
INTO THE HOME OF HIS HOSPITALIZED
UNCLE . . .

SAW, I'VE TURNED THE HOUSE UP-
SIDE DOWN WITHOUT FINDING THE
OLD MURDER'S DOUGH! THE ONLY
PLACE I HAVEN'T LOOKED IS
IN THIS FILE OF OLD NEWSPAPERS.
BETTER TAKE IT UPSTAIRS
WHERE THERE'S MORE
LIGHT . . .



IF I DON'T REPLACE THE
MONEY I STOLE FROM THE
RAILROAD BEFORE THE
MURDERERS CHECK MY BOOKS,
I'LL BE AS FINISHED AS
THAT ONE-ARMED
MURDERER!





WOW!! I'VE FOUND ONE OF THE OLD MYSTERY HIDE-ING PLACES!

WELL, IF YOU READ THE ACCOUNT OF MY DEATH AND SUMMONED ME BACK TO LIFE!

WHA? I MUST BE SEEING THINGS!

AT LAST, AFTER A SLEEP OF OVER A CENTURY, I CAN RESUME MY KILL-ING! ... AND I SHALL START WITH THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN SEND ME BACK TO THE SPIRIT WORLD!

NO... NO!



AAAAH!! THE NEWSPAPER BURNS... THE STORY OF MY DEATH IS BEING DESTROYED! HAAREEE!

IT—IT'S DISINTEGRATING... WHATEVER IT IS!



IT DISAPPEARED? BUT I DON'T HAVE TIME TO FIGURE OUT WHAT IT WAS ALL ABOUT... I'VE GOT TO GET THAT MONEY BACK TO THE RAILROAD BEFORE THE THEFT IS DISCOVERED!



BUT IT WAS ALREADY TOO LATE. AN INSPECTOR CHANDALL FOUND OUT WHEN HE GOT TO THE RAILROAD OFFICE!

I WAS JUST ABOUT TO ORDER YOUR ARREST FOR GRAND LARCENY, CHANDALL! I'LL JUST HAVE YOU FIRED SINCE YOU RETURNED THE MONEY STOLEN... BUT, I'LL SEE THAT YOU'RE BLACKLISTED FROM ANY OTHER RESPONSIBLE JOB!

I'LL GET EVEN WITH YOU AND THE BLASTED RAILROAD IF IT'S THE LAST THING I DO!



AND I THINK I KNOW HOW TO GET MY REVENGE! THAT ONE-ARMED GHOST SAID IT WAS SUMMONED UP WHEN I READ THE ACCOUNT OF ITS DEATH—AND IF THAT'S TRUE, THEN I CAN SUMMON UP PHANTOMS AND MAKE THEM OBEY ME!

BEWARE, GEORGE CHANDALL! YOU ARE ABOUT TO TAPPEL YOUR NIGHTY POWERS!



I'LL CHECK MY THEORY BY READING MORE OF THESE OLD PAPERS/ BUT THIS TIME I'LL STICK CLOSE TO THE FIREPLACE, BECAUSE BURNING THE NEWSPAPER IS APPARENTLY A WAY OF PROTECTING ME IN CASE ANYTHING GOES WRONG/ AH, HERE'S AN ACCOUNT OF THE ACCIDENTAL DROWNING OF A CLERGYMAN IN 1840...



Suddenly...

IT WORKED/ THAT— THAT SPIRIT APPEARED AS SOON AS I READ THE STORY OF THAT DROWNING/ NOW TO FIND OUT WHAT THIS IS ALL ABOUT...



TELL ME WHERE YOU CAME FROM AND HOW YOU GOT HERE OR I'LL DROP THIS PAPER INTO THE FLAMES AND DESTROY YOU!

I WOULD HAVE TOLD YOU, MY SON, EVEN WITHOUT YOUR THREATS/ I CAME FROM THE INVISIBLE WORLD OF SPIRITS WHOSE BODIES HAVE DIED VIOLENTLY BEFORE THEIR APPPOINTED TIME!



SINCE OUR EARTHLY LIVES WERE UNFULFILLED, MY SPIRIT-BROTHERS AND I HAUNT THOSE PLACES WHERE OUR VIOLENT DEATHS ARE STILL RECORDED... SUCH AS GRAVEYARDS OR OLD NEWSPAPER FILES/ THAT PAPER IS THE ONLY COPY IN EXISTENCE, SO I HAUNTED THE ONLY REMAINING ACCOUNT OF MY DEATH... AND WHEN YOU READ THAT ACCOUNT, IT WAS ENOUGH TO MATERIALIZE ME!



I GET IT/ DESTROYING SUCH A PAPER IS ALSO ENOUGH TO DESTROY THE SPIRITS WHO MATERIALIZE/ THAT MEANS I CAN SUMMON UP THE SPIRITS OF THE EVIL DEAD AND FORCE THEM TO OBEY ME... BECAUSE I CAN DESTROY THEM!

BUT THINK OF THE GOOD SPIRITS YOU CAN SUMMON UP... THE GOOD YOU CAN DO—!



HA HA/ I'M NOT INTERESTED IN DOING GOOD/ OH, YOU OLD FOOL... DIE AGAIN!

AHEEE!

YOU STILL HAVE A CHANCE, MORTAL! DO NOT USE YOUR KNOWLEDGE FOR EVIL... OR THE FIRES OF DAMNATION AWAIT YOU!

3-I DIDN'T SUMMON THAT PHANTOM UP / IT—IT MUST BE MY IMAGINATION PLAYING TRICKS ON ME!



I DON'T HAVE TO STAY HERE AND LOOK FOR DEATH ACCOUNTS OF EVIL MEN IN THESE PAPERS! I'VE GOT A BETTER IDEA! THE HISTORICAL MUSEUM OF THE OLD WEST HAS THE ONLY COMPLETE FILE OF OLD WESTERN NEWSPAPERS --- THERE'S WHERE I'LL FIND MORE THAN ENOUGH DEATH ACCOUNTS OF OUTLAWS AND KILLERS!



SOON, YES, I'M WRITING A BOOK ABOUT THE WEST, AND I'D LIKE TO LOOK THROUGH YOUR OLDEST PAPERS.

I'M SORRY, BUT THE VERY OLDEST ONES ARE KEPT IN LOCKED FILES FOR PRESERVATION, BECAUSE THOSE ARE THE ONLY COPIES / BUT YOU CAN USE THE OPEN FILES OF MORE RECENT COPIES.



HE'S GONE, AND I'M ALONE! THOSE ONE-OF-A-KIND NEWSPAPERS ARE THE ONLY ONES THAT SPIRITS HAUNT... SO I'LL JUST HAVE TO BREAK OPEN THESE LOCKED FILES!



AH, HERE'S AN ITEM FROM THE FIRST ISSUE OF THE TOMBSTONE PRESS. "KILLER CORBETT, NOTORIOUS OUTLAW, WAS KILLED YESTERDAY BY A POSSE THAT CAUGHT HIM IN HELL'S CANYON..."

IT'S ABOUT TIME... I THOUGHT SOMEBODY'D EVER GET AROUND TO READING THE LAST REMAINING ACCOUNT OF MY DEATH! ANYHOW HAND OVER THAT PAPER, STRANGER, OR I'LL—

HOLD IT! ONE FALSE MOVE AND THIS PAPER GOES UP IN FLAMES... AND YOU RETURN TO DUST!





LOOKS LIKE YOU'RE HOLDIN' ALL THE ACES! WHAT'S YOUR GAME?

I'M GOING TO SUMMON UP THE WILD WEST'S MOST NOTORIOUS OUTLAWS, AND YOU'RE ALL GONNA TO TAKE ORDERS FROM ME UNLESS YOU WANT TO BE DESTROYED! I'LL ORGANIZE THE GREATEST BAND OF TRAIN ROBBERS THIS COUNTRY HAS EVER SEEN!



SOUNDS ONLY TO ME! IT'S A DEAL... BOSS!

GOOD! YOU HEARD THE BOSS, WHILE I GET BACK TO READING THESE PAPERS!

THE PHANTOMS OF THE FORGOTTEN THAT GEORGE CRANDALL SUMMONED UP WOULD HAVE READ LIKE A "WHO'S WHO" OF WESTERN OUTLAWRY A CENTURY AGO! CUTTHROAT KILLERS... NOTED OUTLAWS, NOTORIOUS OUTLAWS... ALL WERE BROUGHT BACK TO LIFE TO PLAY THEIR PART IN ONE MAN'S MARCH TO DOOM!



AT LAST, WHEN ALL WHO HAD BEEN SUMMONED, JOINED TO MEET GEORGE CRANDALL

BREAK OPEN THE BEST OF THOSE LOCKED FILES AND GET ALL THOSE OLD NEWSPAPERS OUT! THEN LET'S BUST OUT OF HERE!



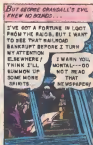
WHA...? STOP THEM, WHATEVER THEY ARE!

NORSEY STOP! GEORGE CRANDALL? KILL 'EM!



YABHH!

NOW HERE'S GEORGE CRANDALL IS EMBARKED ON THE ROAD TO DESTRUCTION!





AN, I GUESS THIS IS THE STORY I'M NOT SUPPOSED TO READ! IT OUGHT TO ADD QUOTE, A FEW KILLERS TO MY GANG...



NO ESCAPE

He stood alone and looked about him at the great, massive studio, a thousand miles from nowhere, and he marveled at the wisdom of the man who had had him brought here.

"Evil is abroad in the world," the man had said, "and everywhere there is violence. Man is bent on destroying life . . . but here, far from the clash of arms, we will collect all knowledge, even if the rest of the world destroys itself."

Yes, Taras Amrat was indeed wise. And here, beneath the roof of this hidden castle, he had gathered the greatest of men, the foremost in all the arts and sciences, so that the seeds of new knowledge, new life, would again grow.

"To each I have given his appointed task," said Taras Amrat, "and for you, my dear Barto, I have a commission that even the great Michelangelo would have envied." He was a tall man, this Taras Amrat, with a withering eye and a head as proud and bold as a lion's. When he spoke and fixed his eye on Barto, the artist was near to trembling.

"You shall paint," Taras Amrat had continued, "the history of life in this world. Your first canvas will show the actual moment of Creation, and then all the slow growth of this planet will be portrayed. The first living cell . . . the primordial mist and primordial slime—all the ages, all the painful evolution, from the moment of this planet's inception, some four billion years ago, to its destruction some few billion years hence. All these things, my great Barto, you shall paint—and till extinction . . . the world will be forever indebted to you."

And then Taras Amrat was gone, and Barto Hamelka was alone in this great studio with its wealth of canvases and brushes and paints. And in one corner of the room was a great library with all the books Barto might need for his research. Barto remembered the garret he had lived in, with its mouldering rafters and the chinks in the wall through which the wind whistled, and he recalled also the days and nights that had been torture because he had been hungry, and he knew it was a special honor that an unknown, impoverished artist should be so chosen. And he fell to his task with unbridled energy.

He scoured through tomes of astronomy and geology and ornithology. He read of the constellations in the sky and cellular growths under water and on the land. All the evolution of man and

beast fell under his pen. And always he made sketches in pencil and charcoal and color. And finally when he began the first of his canvases he felt he was on the road to great achievement.

He painted long and hard and carefully. And when his last brushstroke was applied, he stood off to survey his work. And as he stood and studied the canvas, his brow grew dark. For though everything was in its proper place, the flame was gone from his brush. It was good but not great. The genius was missing. He had painted the Beginning—but the moment of Creation had failed to come to life.

Yet Barto had known failure before, and soon he gathered up his brushes and started again. Canvases after canvases he filled, and always when he was finished he shook his head. He asked them to speak to the master, and when Taras Amrat stood before him he pleaded to begin elsewhere.

"Perhaps I am not-in tune to begin with the Creation," he said. "My thoughts are filled with atomic fission and nuclear design. Why can I not paint these first and then go back to other subjects?"

But Taras Amrat shook his head. "You are young," he said, "and there is plenty of time. And besides, this is as I have planned it."

"But I am not a machine," cried Barto. "You shall have the paintings—but let me follow the needs of my spirit."

"I have given this much thought," said Taras, "and I have decided otherwise."

But Taras had gone warden and he knew when a man nears his breaking point, and he instructed Barto to rest.

"Walk about," he said. "I will have you meet my other great ones. Converse with them. Rest from your work."

And Barto did so. He conversed with the sculptor and the composer and the historian. He exchanged thoughts with the physicist and the astronomer and the chemist. But always his work troubled him and he could not lay it aside, even in his talk, and finally the chemist said:

"I once analyzed paints and soils from which they are made. There are strange clays in this garden. Let me make some paints from them for you."

Barto waited impatiently for the new paints.

Perhaps with them his brush would live again. But as he waited, his artist's eye continually roved. That tree now, yonder, on the knob of the hillock, growing out of the rock—that, he knew he could paint. And his heart yearned to put them on canvas.

And then one day the chemist stood before him, frail and bent but with eyes aglow. "Your paints," he said. "Fresh tubes, all."

Barto seized the tubes, and as the chemist turned away, a thought clutched Barto. A neurological thought, irrelevant, but he had to ask.

"Why," he demanded, "why is everyone so bent and old here—and I a man in my prime?"

"We have been here for many, many years," replied the chemist. "And the artist before you—be, happy soul, died."

"Happy?" cried Barto. "Died?"

"Have you not heard? The roads here lead only to the castle. None leads out. There is no escape."

Barto stood aghast. "No escape?"

"No escape. . . . Now, paint!"

And Barto painted. But not the Creation. His heart was filled with what the chemist had told him, and he stood his easel by the window and painted the tree. At least, *that* was beyond these walls—was free. He painted through the mid-morning and through the afternoon, and just as dusk fell he applied the last stroke. And at the moment he made the flourish which represented his name, he heard a clap of thunder, louder than any thunder he had ever heard, and a flash of lightning brighter than any lightning he had ever known, and when he looked out the window the tree was gone. The rock stood naked and where the trunk had sprouted, now issued a pale wraith of smoke.

And Barto marveled.

But his heart was fiercer for painting his desire, and that night he slept sound.

He was awake with the dawn, and behind his bolted door he set up a fresh canvas. This time too he would capture the old genius, the old strength that had once been his, and his heart leaped as he saw the rock, the little hillock, take shape upon the canvas. He painted with the frenzy of yesterday, and as the sun dwindled he put the finishing touches to the canvas. And then, with a flourish, he made his flourish of a signature.

And as he lifted his brush, there was a thundering noise and a blinding flame of light, and Barto was flung to the floor and it was minutes before he could see again. And when he looked out, the rock—the rock on which the tree had stood—was gone, and the hillock too was gone, and where they had been the earth gaped like a mighty wound.

And this time a fearful dread crept into Barto. "These pigments," he groaned. "There is glory in them—but also death. At the finish of a painting . . . there is the finish also of the subject."

And that night Barto could not sleep.

He awoke thinking of his old studio, and the cobbled street beneath, with the children running lightly in their play, and the hundred little things that had made his life fruitful, if sometimes hungry. And he thrust aside the new pigments and with his old paints began the canvas of the Creation. He made *canvases* after *canvases*, and still he was not satisfied, and the masters came and gazed and he too shook his head.

"No," said Tamas Armas, "I do not see the Creation in this. It is almost like destruction."

"But the moment of Creation," Barto protested, "is kin to the moment of extinction . . ."

"Try again," said the master.

Canvases after canvases Barto filled, and his heart grew more and more black. He saw himself doomed to stand here, day after day till he grew old and moribund and finally died, never painting what he wanted, never going, never doing what he wanted. And suddenly, with a hoarse oath, he seized again the chemist's pigments—the paints with which he had painted so gloriously . . . and so destructively . . .

And his brush flew. Into the night he worked, and his few hours of sleep were fitful, and again he flung from his bed and attacked the canvas. The Creation grew under his fingers—the creation that was to like extinction—and as the day waned, he stood off and saw that now his former genius was again splendorous on the easel. The Heavens were opened and the hall of the earth was flung from the sun in a chameleonic of incandescent light and obliterating darkness such as no painter had ever captured.

And Barto stood and marveled, and in the blackness of his heart there crept a strange joy—a knowledge that soon these prison walls would no longer hold him . . . And quickly he bent to give it the last strokes. And then, as always on the completion of a painting, his brush called to give the final touch, the flourish that was his signature. And at the moment the tip of his brush rose from the canvas, in Barto's instant of freedom, the sphere of the Earth became an immense—an incandescent, glowing ball of flame—and the blast that ripped the Earth was the thunder of Eternity; and the Heavens, as far as the Milky Way, shook and in the distant constellation of Andromeda, a million light years distant, a scanning eye, had it been there, would have seen a strange glowing . . . a glowing as of a planet being born . . . or of a planet in a burst disintegrated . . .

INVITATION ^{TO} YOUR WAKE



DEATH TO ALL WHO WOULD SEEK
TO UNRAVEL OUR SECRETS /
DEATH TO WALTER LANYON!

OF ALL THE ANCIENT BOOKS OF
SORCERY AND DEMONOLOGY, BY
FAR THE RAREST AND MOST FA-
BULOUS IS THE "MECRONORICON".
MOST WRITERS OF SUPERNATURAL
FICTION WOULD RISK DEATH ITSELF
JUST TO GLANCE AT A PAGE OF
THAT FORBIDDEN VOLUME--- BUT
WALTER LANYON UNWITTINGLY
EXPOSED HIMSELF TO AN EVEN
GREATER HORROR WHEN HE
ACCEPTED AN ANONYMOUS INVI-
TATION TO INSPECT A COPY OF THE
BOOK IN THE OLD FRENCH CASTLE
DEEP IN THE CATSKILL MOUNTAINS...

AMONG THOSE WHO STRONGLY OPPOSED WALTER'S TRIP WERE HIS FIANCEE... AND HIS EDITOR...



BUT THE INVITATION YOU
RECEIVED WASN'T EVEN
SIGNED, WALT! THERE'S
NOTHING WHAT
YOU'LL BE GETTING
YOURSELF INTO!

THE "MECRONORICON"
IS JUST ABOUT THE
ONLY BOOK OF THE
OCULT I'VE NEVER
READ! I'VE GOT TO
GO, ELLEN!



SORRY I CAN'T FINISH
THAT STORY I PROMISED
YOU, FRANK--- I'VE
GOT TO GO UP TO THE
CATSKILLS ON URGENT
BUSINESS!

YOU TOO, WALT! EVERY
WRITER WHO WORKS
FOR ME HAS GONE UP
WITH THE SAME EXCUSE
TODAY! WHAT'S GOING
ON UP IN THE CATSKILLS
--- A CONVENTION OF
FANTASY WRITERS?

WHMM... MAYBE OTHERS GOT THE SAME INVITATION I DID? THE NOTE ASKED ME TO BE AT THE CASTLE AT DUSK TOMORROW... SO I'VE WANT TO SET THE JUMP ON THOSE OTHER GUYS, I'D BETTER START NOW!



HOURS LATER, IN A LONELY SECTION OF THE CAPSILLS...

I'D BETTER NOT DRIVE RIGHT UP TO THE CASTLE. THE ONE WHO WROTE THE NOTE MIGHT BE ANGRY AT MY COMING UP SO EARLY! I'LL JUST HIDE THE CYCLE IN THE WOODS AND PRETEND TO BE A LOST HIKER... UNTIL I FIND OUT WHAT THE SCORE IS!



BUT NEAR THE CASTLE...

WHAT'S THAT FLAPPING SOUND...? YE GOOS?



VAMPIRES, WEREWOLVES, ZOMBIES... ALL HEADING FOR THE CASTLE... AS IF A GHASTLY ARMY OF THE SUPERNATURAL IS MEETING THERE?



I...I OUGHT TO SCRAM OUT OF HERE, BUT I CAN'T RUN AWAY FROM THE STORY OF A LIFETIME! WHEN THOSE CREEPS HAVE ALL GONE INSIDE, I'LL BREAK UP AND SEE WHAT'S GOING ON!



AN HOUR LATER...

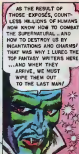
THERE MUST BE HUNDREDS OF THEM IN THERE BY NOW, BUT THEY'VE STOPPED COMING... SO I GUESS IT'S SAFE!

HEAR ME, MY FRIENDS OF THE UNDEAD. I, BELIAL, HAVE SUMMONED YOU HERE TO DECLARE WAR ON THOSE WHO WRITE ABOUT US...WHO TRY TO DISCOVER OUR SECRETS...!





WRITERS HAVE BEEN GOING TO ORIGINAL SOURCES OF THE OCCULT FOR THEIR MATERIAL...AND SO HAVE BEEN REVEALING MANY SECRETS OF THE SUPERNATURAL IN THEIR STORIES!



AS THE RESULT OF THOSE EXPOSES, COUNTLESS MILLIONS OF HUMANS NOW KNOW HOW TO COMBAT THE SUPERNATURAL...AND HOW TO DESTROY US BY INCANTATIONS AND CHARMS! THAT WAS WHY I LURED THE TOP FANTASY WRITERS HERE...AND WHEN THEY ARRIVE, WE MUST WIPE THEM OUT TO THE LAST MAN!



THEN WE WILL START A WAR OF EXTIRPATION AGAINST THE EDITORS OF THE SUPERNATURAL MAGAZINES...UNTIL NO ONE DARES PUBLISH THEM ANYMORE!

WHEN I DO BETTER GET AWAY FROM HERE AND WARN THE WORLD ABOUT THIS PLOT!



WALT LAWSON! WHAT IN BLAZES ARE YOU DOING HERE?

GREAT SCOTT—THAT'S PHIL BYERLY, ANOTHER SUPERNATURAL WRITER! HE MUST'VE DECIDED TO COME UP EARLY, TOO!

GET OUT OF HERE...IF YOU VALUE YOUR LIFE!



YOU CAN'T SCARE ME AWAY, LAWSON! YOU'RE JUST TRYING TO KEEP ME FROM SEEING THE "NECROMONICON"...BUT IT WON'T WORK!

VOICES...HUMANS! AFTER THEM!



WHA...! THOSE—THOSE CREATURES CAN'T BE REAL!

DRIVE OFF, YOU FOOL!



THEY—THEY ARE REAL NAGGERS!

NOW AFTER THE
OTHER ONE, MY
PET?

THEY GOT POOR BYERLY, BUT THEY
WON'T GET ME... UNLESS ALL THOSE
OCULT BOOKS I'VE READ ARE
JUST HOORSH!

LUCKY I HAD A PIECE OF CHALK IN MY
POCKET! NOW TO FIND OUT IF IT'S REALLY
TRUE THAT THE SIGN OF THE SACRED
PENTAGRAM HAS THE POWER OF HARPOON
OFF SUPERNATURAL CREATURES!

GET HIM---AHEEE! BACK-- BACK FROM THE
SIGN OF THE
PENTAGRAM!

BACK-- BACK FROM THE
SACRED SIGN!

WE DARE NOT PURSUE HIM,
MASTER... AS LONG AS HE
IS PROTECTED BY THE
PENTAGRAM!

I KNOW WHO YOU ARE,
WALTER LAWSON... AND
ALTHOUGH YOU HAVE
ESCAPED US ONCE, WE
WILL DESTROY YOU YET!

SOON AFTERWARDS...

I'M SAFE FOR THE TIME
BEING, AND THERE'S ONLY
ONE WAY TO MAKE SURE THAT
NO OTHER WRITER SUFFERS
BYERLY'S FATE!

THERE'S ONLY ONE ROAD
LEADING UP TO THE CASTLE. SO
IF I THIST THIS ROADSIGN AROUND
AND MAKE IT POINT IN THE WRONG
DIRECTION, ANYONE TRYING TO
FIND THE CASTLE
WILL GET LOST!

RHENIS
CASTLE

MUCH LATER, IN WALTER LAWSON'S
APARTMENT BACK IN THE CITY...

...AND BELIAL'S FRIENDS ARE ALSO
OUT TO GET EDITORS LIKE YOU,
FRANK! YOU'VE GOT TO PRINT THE
STORY AND WARN
EVERYONE--

THAT'S THE
CRUELIEST TARN I'VE
EVER HEARD IT'S EVEN
TOO FANTASTIC TO
PUBLISH AS A
SUPER-
NATURAL
STORY!

AFTER THE EDITOR WINDS UP...

I'VE GOT TO GO TO HIM AND CONVINCE HIM THE STORY'S TRUE! BUT I'D BETTER BE PREPARED IN CASE I MEET UP WITH THAT UNHOLY LEGION! LET'S SEE... I'LL NEED SOME HANDSOME POWDER... WOLF'S BANE... AND THOSE SILVER KIDDE CAPSULES I USED IN MY BASH-WAKING EXPERIMENTS WILL COME IN HANDY...!



LATE THAT NIGHT, IN THE DESERTED CITY STREETS...

OH-OH... VAMPIRES! LOOKS LIKE I GOT HERE JUST IN TIME... THAT'S THE EDITOR'S WINDOW THEY'RE TRYING TO GET INTO! WELL, I'LL JUST GIVE THEM A TASTE OF SILVER KIDDE...



SILVER IN ANY FORM IS SUPPOSED TO BE FATAL TO VAMPIRES—I'LL FIND OUT HOW TRUE THAT IS RIGHT NOW!



HAAARGHHHH!

A MINUTE LATER, IN THE EDITOR'S APARTMENT...

FRANK, OPEN UP THIS IS WALT LANDONI!

LANDONI? IF HE'S RESPONSIBLE FOR THE MESS IN MY APARTMENT, I'LL—



QUICKLY WALT TOLD THE STORY...

...AND WHEN THE VAMPIRES INHALED THE SILVER KIDDE GAS, THEY BECAME DEAD RATS!

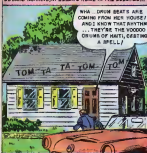
YOU PSYCHOPATHIC LIAR! YOU THREW THOSE DEAD RATS INTO MY WINDOW TO MAKE ME BELIEVE YOUR CRAZY STORY! GET OUT—I'M THROUGH WITH YOU!



I COULDN'T REASON WITH HIM... AND I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO NOW! I THINK I'LL GO SEE ELLEN... MAYBE SHE'LL KNOW HOW TO CONVINCE AN EDITOR!



TOWARD MORNING, AT ELLEN'S HOME IN THE SUBURBS...



WHA... DRUM BEATS ARE COMING FROM HER HOUSE! AND I KNOW THAT ANYTHING... THEY'RE THE '000000' DRUMS OF HAITI, CASTING A SPELL!



OH! NO! THOSE ZOMBIES HAVE CHANGED HER INTO A-A EAT!



THE POWER OF THE MANDRAGON ROOT IS SUPPOSED TO TURN ZOMBIES WHO EAT THEM BACK INTO HUMANS. I BROUGHT SOME ALONG!



HARRREEEY



IT—IT WORKED... BUT IT DIDN'T AFFECT ELLEN! SHE SEEMS PARALYZED, BUT HER EYES ARE PLEADING WITH ME... AS IF begging me to kill her, AND PUT HER OUT OF HER AGONY!



I—I CAN'T BEAR TO LOOK AT HER... I OH! A-A MESSAGE FOR ME!

WALTER LAWSON
SURRENDER
YOURSELF AT
THE CASTLE IF YOU
WANT YOUR WIFE
TO RETURN TO HER
HUMAN FORM



IT WAS THEN THAT WALTER LAWSON KNEW WHAT HE HAD TO DO...

I'LL JUST WRITE OUT THE FULL STORY OF WHAT HAPPENED AND WHAT I'M GOING TO DO... AND ADD A NOTE TO ELLEN, ASKING HER TO TAKE THE STORY TO THE EDITOR WHEN SHE'S FREE OF THAT HORRIBLE SPELL! THEN... BAAH! I GO TO THE CASTLE!

WITH DESPERATE URGENCY, WALTER RETURNS TO HIS APARTMENT TO CHECK HIS RESEARCH BOOKS, MAKE A FEW PURCHASES AT A DRUG HOUSE, AND HURRIES TO THE AIRPORT. . .



WE KNOW YOU'RE A TRUST-WORTHY PILOT, MR. LANSON. . . THERE'S NO NEED TO LEAVE A DEPOSIT COVERING THE FULL COST OF THE PLANE!

WELL, ACCIDENTS DO HAPPEN. YOU KNOW!

I JUST HOPE THAT MY RESEARCH BOOKS ARE RIGHT WHEN THEY SAY THAT A VOOODOO SPELL VANISHES WHEN THE BEING WHO ORDERED THAT SPELL CAST IS DESTROYED!



AND THE BOOKS HAD ALSO BETTER BE RIGHT ABOUT THE POWER OF THE DRUG BELLAGONNA TO DESTROY ALL SUPER-NATURAL CREATURES IN THE PRESENCE OF FIRE!

MASTER LOOK!



AS THE BELLAGONNA POWDERS MIX WITH THE FLAMING GASOLINE. . .

WE PERISH --- YAAGHHH!



NEXT DAY. . . AND HE (SPOKE) HE WROTE ME WAS GOING TO MAKE A SUICIDE RYDE AGAINST THE CASTLE TO DESTROY BELIAL AND HIS DEMONS! I RECOVERED. (SPOKE) BUT WALT DIED!

I-I BELIEVE HIS STORY NOW! AND IF HE GAVE HIS LIFE TO SAVE US, THEN THE LEAST I CAN DO IS PRINT HIS STORY. . . WALT LANSON'S LAST STORY.

WRITER DIES IN PLANE CRASH

THE END

**DOCTORS
OF ALL
SKIN TYPES
TESTED
THESE
SUCCESS OF**

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IN CLINICAL TESTS**

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TO HELP YOUR
SKIN LOOK
LOWELIER AND
MORE ATTRACTIVE
IN A FEW
MINUTES
OR DOUBLE
YOUR MONEY BACK!**

**Leading
SKIN
SPECIALISTS
RECOMMEND THIS
DOUBLE TREATMENT**



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The already proven ingredients in the scientifically tested formula of Scope Products have been compounded to help overcome these common errors of pharos and cosmetics. Instantly covers pimples before it helps remove the dirt that skin irritation often causes with soap!

**SKIN DOCTORS STATE THAT
TO RESCUE YOUR SKIN MAY
PROLONG YOUR COMPLEXION
TROUBLE AND MAKE IT
MORE DIFFICULT TO CLEAR UP!**

**RELAX MAY BE HARMFUL—
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with its special "Covering" action!
MAIL COUPON AT ONCE!**

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HIDES PIMPLES ON LIGHT, AVERAGE & DARK COMPLEXIONS!

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